

Hadith: Obligation to verify authenticity

by

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Bismillah Walhamdulillah Was Salaatu Was Salaam 'ala Rasulillah
In the Name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful

Notes on the Hadith and Sunnah: Obligation to verify authenticity ^[1] Allah Most High says in the Qur'an (surat al-a'raf 7:33): **Say: My Lord has only forbidden indecencies, the inward and the outward, and sin, and wrongful oppression, and that you associate with Allah that for which He sent down never authority, and that you say concerning Allah that which you know not.**

Allah Most High says in the Qur'an (surat al-isra' 17:36): **And follow not that whereof you have no knowledge. Surely, the hearing, the sight, the heart--all of those shall be questioned of.**

Allah Most High says in the Qur'an (surat al-talaq 65:2): **Then, when they have reached their term, retain them in kindness or part from them in kindness, and call to witness two men of uprightness ^[2] among yourselves, and keep your testimony upright for Allah. . .**

Allah Most High says in the Qur'an (surat al-hujurat 49:6): **O you who believe! If an unrighteous ^[3] bring you tidings, verify it, lest you afflict a people in ignorance, and then be sorry for what you did.**

Muslim reported in his introduction to al-Sahih (1/39): . . . A well-known athar (hadith) from the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and his House and give them peace) states, **"If anyone ascribes to me a hadith seeing ^[4] (or: which is seen ^[5]) that it is untrue, he is thereby one of the liars."** ^[6] Abu Bakr ibn Abi Shaybah told us Waki' told us from Shu'bah from al-Hakam from 'Abd al-Rahman ibn Abi Laylah from Samurah ibn Jundab; AND, Abu Bakr ibn Abi Shaybah told us also Waki' told us from Shu'bah and Sufyan from Habib from Maymun ibn Abi Shabib from al-Mughirah ibn Shu'bah; They both (Samurah and al-Mughirah) said: the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and his House and give them peace) said that.

Muslim reported in his introduction to al-Sahih (#1): Abu Bakr ibn Abi Shaybah told us Ghundar told us from Shu'bah; AND, Muhammad ibn al-Muthanna and Ibn Bashshar both told us, they said Muhammad ibn Ja'far told us Shu'bah told us; from Mansur from Rib'i ibn Hirash that he heard 'Ali (Allah be pleased with him) delivering a khutbah, he said the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and his House and give them peace) said, **"Do not lie about me, for he who lies about me will enter hell-fire."** ^[7]

Muslim reported in his introduction to al-Sahih (#5): 'Ubayd Allah ibn Mu'adh al-'Anbari told us my father told us; AND, Muhammad ibn al-Muthanna told us 'Abd al-Rahman ibn Mahdi told us; they both said Shu'bah told us from khubayab ibn 'Abd al-Rahman from Hafs ibn 'Asim from Abu

Hurayrah, he said the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and his House and give them peace) said, **"It is enough falsehood for a person to transmit everything he hears."**

al-Shafi'i reported in al-Risalah (394/#1090): `Abd al-`Aziz [told us] from Muhammad ibn `Ajlal from `Abd al-Wahhab ibn Bukht from `Abd al-Wahid al-Nasri from Wathilah ibn al-Asqa' from the Prophet (Allah bless him and his House and give them peace), who said, **"Surely, the greatest of lies is that who ascribes to me that which I did not say, and who claims to have dreamt what he did not dream, and who claims that he is the son of someone other than his own father."** [8]

al-Shafi'i reported in al-Risalah (396/#1092): `Abd al-`Aziz [told us] from Muhammad ibn `Amr from Abu Salamah from Abu Hurayrah that the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and his House and give them peace) said, **"Let him who ascribes to me what I did not say come to his abode in hell-fire."** [9]

al-Shafi'i reported in al-Risalah (397/#1094): Sufyan [told us] from Muhammad ibn `Amr from Abu Salamah from Abu Hurayrah that the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and his House and give them peace) said, **"You may report about the Children of Israel and there is no blame [10]. Report about me, and do not lie about me."** Then, al-Shafi'i commented, This is the most emphatic hadith ever transmitted from the Messenger of Allah on this matter. We have relied on it as well as on other hadiths in not accepting any hadith except from a trustworthy transmitter and we know the truthfulness of those who transmitted it from first to last.

If someone would ask: What evidence is there in this hadith for what you have stated?

It would be said: Knowledge has made it certain that the Prophet would never, in any circumstances, order anyone to lie about the Children of Israel nor about anyone else. So when he permitted the reporting from the Children of Israel, it was not the acceptance of lying about the Children of Israel that he permitted, but he permitted only the acceptance of that from a person who reported it, whose truthfulness or untruthfulness was not known. Nor did he permit it from a person whose untruthfulness was known, for it is transmitted from him that: **"If anyone relates a report [11] seeing it [12] (or: he is shown [13]) to be untrue, he is thereby one of the liars."** And whoever relates from a liar is not guiltless of lying because he sees the liar lying in his report. For finding the truth or falsity of most of the Hadith, there is no evidence except truthfulness or untruthfulness of the reporter. Except in a few special cases, where truth or falsity would be found if the transmitter reports what cannot possibly be the case, or what is contradicted by reports that is better established and is more indicative of the truth. Since the Messenger of Allah distinguished between reporting from him and reporting from the Children of Israel by saying: **"... Report from me, but do not lie about me."**; knowledge makes it certain, Allah willing, that the lying which he prohibited them from is the hidden lying. That is to report from one whose truthfulness is unknown, because lying is prohibited in all circumstances. Then, there is no lying greater than lying about the Messenger of Allah, Allah bless him.

Footnotes

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2 Arabic: `adl

3 Arabic: fasiq

4 Arabic: yara

5 Arabic: yura

6 This is an authentic hadith. Also reported by Ibn Majah in al-Sunan (#31-33);

7 This is an authentic hadith. Also, reported by Ahmad in al-Musnad (#629, 630, 1000, 1001, 1292); al-Bukhari in al-Sahih (Fath al-Bari, 1/199/#106);

8 This is an authentic hadith. Also, reported by Ahmad in al-Musnad (3/491, 4/106, 4/107); al-Bukhari in al-Sahih (Fath al-Bari, 6/540/#3509);

9 This is an authentic hadith. Also, reported by Ahmad in al-Musnad (2/501); Ibn Majah in al-Sunan (#29);

10 Arabic: wa la haraj

11 hadith

12 Arabic: yarahu

13 Arabic: yurahu